

I am a Grant. I show there are other Grants. A Chinese Englishman once told me that Grant was a very common name. There are Grants of Grant and the Grants of Dalrymple; there are Grants in Edinburgh and Grants in London. Alas! the Grants are a disinherited race, for their grandfathers, it seems, always squandered the fortunes which they ought to have left to their sons. At least, I know that it was the case of my own grandfather. Had he not played ducks and drakes with my inheritance I should now have been—but there, I am content to be what I am, Grant of Tullybarlane, and never a dearer or lovelier name than that which I am to dwell in. My father died, and left me, for being so old of the place. But then the strangest event of my life is bound up with his possession. And surely I may well remember and be thankful for that event, for without it yonder lady with the silver hair would scarcely now have been sitting near me, and laughing at the follies of an old man as she does.

Five-and-thirty years ago I was living here in the grange at Tullybarlane. The place had come to my father by bequest not many years before, and he had scarcely learned to play the laird before he died and left it to me. I was only a boy then, and had Scottish and Irish blood in my veins, and my mother and I were young and full of our lives in the place. So there I lived and grew up to manhood, and then in the course of years I fell in love. Accordingly, one winter morning I rode across to Glen Lyvanosha, and asked Mr. Fraser to give me his daughter to be my wife. Of course I had found out beforehand that Miss Fraser was not unwilling to be given.

Well, we had a long interview, and the results in brief were this: I had left home considerably wealthy, as one is wont to be at four-and-twenty, and I returned about as despoiled and indigent as any reasonable man ever was. Mr. Fraser was an old friend. He had been one of my guardians. He was my father's exorcerer. I respected my daughter, and I loved my woman. Tullybarlane is a better property than Glen Lyvanosha. What was there to stand in our way? But when I came back I felt like a man who has been stunned by a tremendous blow. All of a sudden, for the first time in my life, I learned that my title to Tullybarlane was not beyond dispute! I heard that a certain document had long been missing from the title deeds, and that till that document was found I could never be entirely secure in my own home. But what was far worse, under the circumstances, Mr. Fraser informed me he could not encourage my suit for his daughter's hand.

What followed I don't quite remember. I have a haunting fear that I lost my temper, and that on one side or the other a great deal of strong language was used. I know I swore I would never give Nelly up, not even if I were turned out of Tullybarlane track and crop next day. Of course, it was very foolish, but then the circumstances were exceptional. And for the next four days I did nothing. I felt, except consult lawyers and look over papers and rummage every hole and corner of the grange for the missing deed. But what Mr. Fraser told me proved to be only too true.

In the week that followed I remember three things distinctly, not that they were themselves important, but that they were upon that strange event which marks a turning point in a man's life. First, that I went to Glen Lyvanosha, and was told that Mr. and Miss Fraser had left home, to stay with friends in Edinburgh. The second is that my man George, who acted as footman and valet to me, got drunk one night and left the house door wide open—for which I have not ceased thank Providence ever since. Now, as I am loath to confess these failings. Whisky, I must get to say, has an attraction for men in these northern climates which few can resist. But, whether it was that I was out of sorts, or whether it was that my mother was alarmed, I don't know, but I resolved to make an example, and I turned the man out of the house the next day. The third incident was more important, and shall be told at length.

I am a good sleeper. I don't dream much, I don't believe in dream warnings and such things. I have no faith in ghosts—though I know for a fact, that my cousin the Mac Mocks have a bannish in their family—as a fact, I say. But about that time I used to try and dream of a certain lady, and so one night I fell asleep and I did dream. And this is what I dreamed.

I thought I was in Edinburgh, standing in Fraser street and let me find my street in England, or anywhere else which can compare with that) and waiting by the Waverley monument. Opposite me was a hotel, which I suppose I was watching, for out of it presently came, as clear and vivid as in life, Nelly Fraser, with her veil over her head, she came slowly toward me and lifted her veil, revealing a face so sweet and miserable that I scarcely know it, and then, as I stepped forward, she raised her hand, and, pointing up towards the gorge toward the High street hill, vanished into a moving mist. Then the shadows began to shift and shuffle themselves, and presently out came another vision from my dream. I was there still, standing, but all the surroundings had changed. I seemed to be in a sort of shop or office. A counter was before me, and all around me were thin phantom figures, with no features that I could see. Only one among these misty shapes had a visible human face. And that one advanced toward me with a smile which I shall never forget. It was the face of a young man, slightly drooped, as if his owner were shy or diffident, with blue, bright eyes and gentle, handsome features, and fair hair, and lips that seemed to be made for laughter, and a smile that shone like a gleam of sunshine there.

And in a moment the face and form had vanished. The darkness seemed to grow darker. I heard soft steps walking in the air. I felt as if a cold wind were blowing in my face. Suddenly I saw the chill sea shining afar off under the white stars. A voice that was harsh broke out in harsh laughter beside me, and then—I woke.

Two days after I set out for Edinburgh, with three objects in view. I wanted to consult an eminent advocate. I wanted to get a new servant. And I wanted, at least, to find out where the Frasers were.

I saw the great advocate, and he confirmed my fears. "Unless the missing deed is found, my dear sir," he said in his blandest accents, "your title is so defective as to be legally worthless should a rival claimant arise."

I did not see the Frasers, but I got their address, and I wrote one letter to the father and four to the daughter.

I engaged a new man servant in this way: Our need of a servant being pressing, I went, with three others, to a place in my life, to a registry office. The shop lay in the corner of the town, up beyond the High street, and when I entered it there were several subdued looking beings, unfortunate applicants, I suppose, standing round. Behind the counter were a man and woman, and to the former, having a prejudice in favor of doing business with my own sex, begotten, perhaps, of almsiveness, I applied. He kept me waiting long time. Then he looked over a prodigious ledger and read me out numerous applications which were perfectly useless. At last, however, he came to one which I thought

I decided to go out and have my hair cut, and then return to see if the young man were there.

When I came back some twenty minutes later the small office was full of people. As I entered something in the look of the place and the attitude of the figures struck me as familiar. But I dismissed the idea at once. The shopman came to meet me.

"The young man is here, sir," he said, and he turned with a wave of his hand to a figure behind him. The figure advanced. It was the figure of a good-looking boy rather than of a man, slight and fair, and with the head a little drooping. As the boy raised his face to look at me I started back. Feature for feature, as clear as it could be, it was the face I had seen in my dream!

I don't know what followed; I don't know whether my conduct appeared very strange. I don't know what the boy said to me, or what I said to him. I have only a vague idea that I generally assented to everything. And I know that when I went home to Tullybarlane Dr. J. J. Loch went with me as my man.

Tullybarlane is a desolate place. It lies in a narrow gorge which runs down straight to the sea. The hills slope up on either hand, and end in tumbling rocks or caverns where the sea foam breaks and the sea waves sing. The old grange is a rambling house. From its windows you can look over the beach and only the falling gardens separate you from it. On the right hand is the library, which has been down a long avenue of firs to the sea, and beyond the library stretches the deserted part of the house, which for five and thirty years I have been meaning to repair. The library was rather a gloomy room, commanding only by a long passage with the other inhabited parts of the house. For, of course, the whole house was rather lonely. For myself I never minded that, but I fancy it struck my new servant as a bit solitary and weird.

Now, I must tell you about the doings of this young fellow. A day or two after my return, both my mother and I began to notice something strange about him. It was not that I did not like him, for I took a strong fancy to him at once, and here, five and thirty years after, he lives to this day, less, I think, of a servant to us than a faithful and trusted friend. But certainly his behavior was odd, and the first thing we observed was this.

One afternoon I was sitting with my mother in the drawing room. My mother had ordered tea. Personally, I am afraid of these unwholesome drinks, and never have taken to the surreptitious fashion of working in an extra meal in the afternoon. But I was sitting with her and talking very disconsolately, for I felt thoroughly depressed. Presently, Sydney came in with the cups of tea on a tray—a detestable plan of taking tea if you must take it, but one to which my dear mother was partial. He handed the tray to my mother, and he handed it to me. Then, to our surprise, he walked straight across the room to a big armchair that stood near the window, and handed the tray to the empty chair! But the armchair, or its invisible occupant, refused it, apparently, and the man withdrew.

I am endowed with a large fund of Scottish humor, and I burst out laughing. My mother was equally perplexed.

"He must have thought there was some one sitting there," she said. "He must be very shortsighted, poor boy. It's very strange."

"He must be as blind as a bat," I answered, "or else has been playing a practical joke on us. I never saw anything so absurd in my life."

But in the next few days I was destined to see stranger things. I asked Sydney if he were shortsighted, but he denied the charge with warmth. And yet the more I watched him the more obvious was it that he was always meeting invisible people. Once, as I changed to see him coming down stairs, I distinctly saw him draw back, pressing himself against the wall, as if to allow an invisible person to pass. Another time I saw him walk to the front door, open it, and hold it, as if for an invisible visitor to pass out. And I can still stand it no longer. I am the worst possible hand at darts. Finding with servants, but I was determined to have an explanation of this. So that afternoon I spoke to Sydney.

"Sydney," I said, bluntly, "are you given to seeing ghosts?"

"I, sir!" he answered, with a smile of astonishment. "No, sir, I never saw a ghost in my life."

"Then, what do you mean," I broke out, "by behaving in the way you have been doing?"

The boy started. Evidently he thought me off my head. I determined to speak more gently.

"Then," I said, "who was that person you showed out of the house this morning?"

I knew I had him there, for I was sure nobody had called.

"O, you mean the old gentleman in gray," he said. "He left no name. I thought, sir, he seemed to be at home in the house; I had seen him here so often, sir."

Now it was my turn to stare. I was dumbfounded. I literally stammered for want of words. Then I showed what I have always thought was remarkable presence of mind. I turned around and walked into the dining room, telling the boy to follow. There I poured out a glass of whisky and gave it to him.

"Drink that," I said, "and you will have better sight down."

And that he thought me as eccentric as I thought him. But he merely said, "Thank you, sir," and drank the whisky.

"Do you feel quite well?" I asked frigidly.

"Quite well, thank you, sir."

"Are you subject to delusions or hallucinations?"

"No, sir; never, sir," he answered promptly, with a lurking smile which he vainly tried to conceal.

That smile annoyed me. I broke out again:

"Then, what on earth do you mean," I cried, "by telling me this nonsense about a gentleman in gray?"

Sydney rose. There was some dignity in his manner. He spoke respectfully, but in an injured tone:

"Excuse your pardon, sir, but I only told you what the gentleman who called, and I thought, sir, you might have seen him, for he passed by you, and I fancied he nodded to you as he passed."

Really, things had come to a pretty pass! Here was my own servant accusing me of seeing invisible phantoms which only existed in his own disordered brain!

But there, I will not repeat all the conversation that followed. I must say Sydney kept his temper wonderfully, for I lost mine. However, we had a long explanation, which ended in this way. The boy asserted positively that he had three or four times seen an old gentleman in gray walking about. After that I had seen him sitting in the drawing room with my mother. He had seen him in the passages up stairs and in the grounds outside. He had, he admitted, wondered who he could be, and had fancied that he must be some very intimate friend, or some one connected with the establishment. He had never heard him speak, certainly. He

But not as yet questioned any of the other
 people about him. But then he had him-
 self only been a few days in the house, and as
 yet did not know all the people about the
 place. When I told him that no one else in
 the house had ever heard of such a person
 Sydney was completely staggered. In fact,
 the only result of our conversation was to
 leave on the minds of each of us grave doubts
 as to the other's sanity, if not as to his own.
 But before we parted I made the boy promise
 me solemnly that the very next time he saw
 this mysterious figure he would summon me
 at once.

Next day nothing happened, and I medi-
 tated dismaying Sydney. The day after, an
 event occurred which changed the current of
 my thoughts, which, thank God, altered my
 whole life since, and which has made Sydney
 London's most faithful friend I have.

It was late in the afternoon—a winter dusk.
 I was upstairs in my bedroom, writing a
 letter to Noky, vowing that I would never
 give her up, and yet seeing no prospect of
 ever being able to claim her for my wife. It
 was that hour when the day begins to pass
 into the night, and shadows have grown
 gigantic, and men's thoughts are turning
 toward dinner. Suddenly I was roused by a
 quick step and a knock at my door. I called
 out "Come in," and Sydney appeared on the
 threshold. He looked very pale and excited
 as far as I could see him by the dim light of
 my candles, and he spoke in a strange voice.
 "He is here, sir, the old gentleman in gray
 —in the passage."

I jumped up, and was following him in a
 moment, but I had not been well past 6
 o'clock, and yet the lights in the corridor
 were still unlighted. I looked all round, but
 could see no one.

"Where?" I said in a whisper; for I think
 the ghastly and the boy's strange looks had
 frightened my common sense out of me.

Sydney took me by the arm and pointed.
 I felt he was trembling all over. And for
 my own part, an uncomfortable chill seemed
 to be creeping through my limbs.

"There, sir, there—don't you see him?—at
 the top of the stairs. He's beckoning us to
 follow—come."

I strained my eyes in the direction where
 he pointed, but could discern nothing. How-
 ever, I caught hold of Sydney's arm and
 followed him silently, like a sheep. The
 lights of London were dimly visible.

The boy led the way down stairs, appar-
 ently keeping his eyes fixed on something he
 could see in front. I held him tightly. We
 went down and across the hall, and then out
 of the front door into the cold air. It was
 quite dark outside, though one or two blurred
 stars were flickering palely, and the moon,
 I thought, was struggling behind a cloud.

Round the house we went, faster and faster,
 until the gardens at the back, and down the
 slopes toward the sea. Sydney seemed to be
 dragging me along. Once I caught a glimpse
 of his face, and I saw it was deadly white,
 though his eyes were staring wildly after
 the phantom he was following. Still he
 went on and on. We were nearing the beach
 now, and I could hear the surf beating
 against the rocks and duly see the white
 frosts of the waves hanging in the fog.

"Now we are on the beach. I felt
 like seaweed under my feet and stumbled.
 Still the boy dragged me along. Now we
 must be on the brink of the water, I thought,
 and shivered. Then I put out my other hand
 and clutched at Sydney's arm.

"In God's name, where are you going?" I
 said, in a terrified whisper.

The boy did not answer. He stopped dead.
 The darkness was thick about us. We were
 standing in a mist, and even the blurred
 stars had faded out. Suddenly I felt a wave
 break over my feet. And at that moment
 a hissing out and echoing across the darkness,
 there grated in my ears the sound of a harsh
 and hollow laugh—the very laugh I had
 heard in my dream.

The gloom was so dense that I could only
 see the outline of Sydney's body, though I
 was grasping him with my two hands. There
 was a perfect silence. Still I stood there
 motionless, rooted to the rocks. Then I felt
 a tug. Now we were on the beach. I felt
 like seaweed under my feet and stumbled.
 Another wave washed up against my feet as
 I turned with him and began to ascend to
 the gardens again. The fog was growing
 thinner. Presently it parted, and a strong
 wind seemed to have risen suddenly out of
 the sea. Now I could distinctly see Sydney's
 eyes still fixed on the invisible thing before
 him. I could see, too, that we were mount-
 ing the pale avenue of fir trees, and from the
 distant windows of the library a dim light
 was casting shadows down upon our faces.
 But we did not make for those windows. My
 guide turned off to the left, and we entered
 the deserted part of the house. I felt utterly
 spellbound. I seemed to have lost all power
 of volition. I believe I should blindly have
 followed that boy to my death.

We had plunged into a labyrinth of
 shadowy rooms, leading one after another
 into the heart of the house. I cannot
 tell. I had not been there for years. Sydney
 could never have been in it, and he led me on
 rapidly, and never faltered or hesitated once,
 for there was a faint light shining through
 the windows as we passed, and by that light
 he guided me. We crossed several empty
 rooms and passages, and at last came out into
 a long corridor. That, too, we traversed.
 At the further end a door opened before us,
 we stepped through it into my own library,
 and stood there in the lamplight, gazing
 stupidly into Sydney's face.

He, too, had paused. But he never spoke a
 word, nor looked at me. His eyes were fixed
 on a tall bookcase in a corner of the room.
 Presently he began to move slowly toward it,
 and I followed him in a dazed way. Then, as
 we approached it to my utter amazement,
 the whole bookcase swung back upon its
 hinges, revealing a small closet, which I had
 never seen before, with some dusty rolls of
 paper lying on a shelf within it. With a
 weird cry Sydney sprang forward, wrench-
 ing himself from my grasp. He seized the
 papers, and, turning, thrust them into my
 hand. Then, with his face as white as snow
 and eyes distended, he raised one arm and
 pointed to the window. In another moment
 he had tottered back and fallen on the floor.

But I was already at the window. In my
 frenzy I dashed my shoulder against it. The
 fastening gave way. The glass came crash-
 ing down about me. I was outside, standing
 in the white, blue night. Round me the wind
 howled in a wild and blustering. The fog had
 melted away. Overhead the stars were
 burning golden. The banished clouds had
 gone. But no sign of any human figure,
 man or ghost, was there. Only the desolate
 avenue, with its fir trees, bending over it,
 and at the far end, in the dimness, the high
 oवन over the whiteness!

When I went back into the library I found
 Sydney in a dead faint on the floor. I rushed
 to the bell and rang it till its tones went peal-
 ing and clashing through the house. Then I
 raised the boy in my arms and carried him
 upstairs into the lighted hall. The blood from
 the cuts of the broken glass was running
 freely down my face and hands. But I did
 not mind it, for I felt as if life had suddenly
 come back to me. And when my mother and
 the servants came out and gathered round
 me, laughing, round me, I felt on my knees
 beside the boy and wept as I never wept, I
 think, before that day or since.

I have no more to tell. The closet in the
 library opened, I found, by a secret spring,
 but what hand opened it that terrible night I

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